

Congresswoman Kilpatrick Introduces Legislation to Address the Mental Health Care Needs of America's Military Personnel, Veterans, and Families

Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (13th District, Michigan) recently introduced the Veterans and Families Mental Health Act of 2007 to address the needs of the active military, veterans, and their families. This measure would provide a broad analysis of mental health needs and provide solutions to handle the unique injuries of the men and women returning home from overseas combat tours so that they receive appropriate care.

This bill would require the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to launch a comprehensive national research effort focused on the physical and mental health and other adjustments needs of returning Iraq and Afghanistan service members and their families. It would also specifically analyze the mental health needs of service members and their families, special needs of military children and female veterans, and the challenges of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) diagnosis and treatment. The bill would help develop vocational and academic retraining requirements for brain-injured veterans and their families, help us understand the impact that high numbers of military women and men who are deployed have on communities, and tackle challenges associated with an older and more often married force.

This bill is supported by many different groups, including Veterans for America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, and the Brain Injury Association of America. For more information, please contact Riley Grimes at (202) 225-2261 or riley.grimes@mail.house.gov.